A/C.4/69/
INF/4/
Add.1

Readex
Fiche

United Nations A/C.4/69/INF/4/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 January 2015

English only

Sixty-ninth session
Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

The annex to the present note provides the report of the Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

15-00875 (E) 030215

Please recycle

Annex

Report of the Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on the methods of work of the Committee

1. The present report responds to paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 68/307, in which the Assembly requested each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the beginning of every session and invited the Chairs of the Main Committees to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-ninth session on any best practices and lessons learned with a view to improving working methods.

2. The review of the working methods of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) was conducted bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 48/264, 58/126, 58/316, 59/313, 60/286, 64/301, 65/315, 66/294, 67/297 and 68/307 on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly.

Election of the Bureau and rotation of elected officers

3. At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in 2001, the Committee adopted a system for the rotation of the posts of Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur, following the English alphabetical order of the regional groups (see A/C.4/56/SR.17 and 18). That system was not followed consistently in the intervening years. The rotation of the officers of the Committee from the fifty-sixth to sixty-eighth sessions was the following:

Session	*Chair*	*Rapporteur*
Fifty-sixth (2001)	Malaysia (Asian States)	South Africa (African States)
Fifty-seventh (2002)	South Africa (African States)	Slovakia (Eastern European States)
Fifty-eighth (2003)	Uruguay (Latin American and Caribbean States)	Ireland (Western European and other States)
Fifty-ninth (2004)	Myanmar (Asian States)	Tunisia (African States)
Sixtieth (2005)	Azerbaijan (Eastern European States)	Brunei Darussalam (Asian States)
Sixty-first (2006)	Nepal (Asian States)	Azerbaijan (Eastern European States)
Sixty-second (2007)	Sudan (African States)	Honduras (Latin American and Caribbean States)
Sixty-third (2008)	Argentina (Latin American and Caribbean States)	Finland (Western European and other States)
Sixty-fourth (2009)	Qatar (Asian States)	Sudan (African States)
Sixty-fifth (2010)	Zimbabwe (African States)	Afghanistan (Asian States)

Session	*Chair*	*Rapporteur*
Sixty-sixth (2011)	Romania (Eastern European States)	Kuwait (Asian States)
Sixty-seventh (2012)	Gabon (African States)	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Eastern European States)
Sixty-eighth (2013)	El Salvador (Latin American and Caribbean States)	Slovakia (Eastern European States)

4. By its decision 68/505, the General Assembly decided that the post of Chair of the Committee for the sixty-ninth to seventy-third sessions would rotate as follows:

Session	*Chair*
Sixty-ninth (2014)	Asia-Pacific States
Seventieth (2015)	African States
Seventy-first (2016)	Eastern European States
Seventy-second (2017)	Latin American and Caribbean States
Seventy-third (2018)	African States

5. Accordingly, Nepal served as Chair of the Committee for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

6. By its decision 69/524, to ensure a balanced rotation of the post of Rapporteur among the regional groups in accordance with the rotation of the post of Chair for the seventieth to seventy-third sessions of the General Assembly, the Assembly decided that the rotation of that post would be as follows:

Session	*Rapporteur*
Seventieth session (2015)	Western European and other States
Seventy-first session (2016)	African States
Seventy-second session (2017)	Asia-Pacific States
Seventy-third session (2018)	Eastern European States

7. The Committee wishes to reaffirm its practice of having its officers elected on the basis of geographical distribution.

8. The Committee reaffirms paragraph 9 of section B of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/126, in which it is stipulated, among other things, that the Bureau should be elected three months in advance of the next session in order to foster better advance planning and preparation of the work of the Committee. In

accordance with paragraph 3 (f) of the annex to Assembly resolution 58/316, the Bureau-elect will meet immediately after its election to discuss the organization and division of the work and to consider the programme of work of the Committee. With a view to ensuring the continuity and effective organization of its work, the incoming Bureau will continue to meet the outgoing Bureau to consult on and review issues relating to the efficient functioning of the Committee.

Agenda and programme of work of the Committee

9. The Committee was created by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/233, by which it decided to merge the Special Political Committee and the Trusteeship Committee (including Non-Self-Governing Territories) (Fourth Committee) into one committee and decided that the Main Committees of the Assembly should be the following:[a]

(a) Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee);

(b) Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);

(c) Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee);

(d) Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee);

(e) Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee);

(f) Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).

10. The Committee deals with issues relating to decolonization, as well as items of a political nature, including a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and questions relating to information.

11. At the sixty-eighth session, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/123, a new item entitled "Comprehensive review of special political missions" was added to the agenda of the Committee.

12. Most of the items allocated to the Committee are considered annually. The exceptions are the item entitled "Assistance in mine action", which, in accordance with paragraph 4 (j) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, is considered every two years, and the item entitled "University for Peace", which, pursuant to paragraph 4 (k) of the same resolution, is considered every three years.

13. The five items relating to decolonization have been clustered, whereby a joint general debate is held on the five items, following which action is taken on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under the items at the same meeting. A mixed approach is taken to the consideration of the items entitled "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East" and "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories". While there are separate general debates on each of those items, the items are introduced and action is taken on the draft resolutions submitted under them at the same meeting.

14. A particular practice of the Committee in relation to decolonization is the hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and petitioners (who

[a] See rule 98 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.17).

can be individuals or representatives of organizations), who speak on some of the 17 Territories that are under consideration by the General Assembly and its Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The practice of the Fourth Committee is to hear the petitioners early in the session. While the number had been increasing in recent years, 74 petitioners made statements at the sixty-ninth session, compared with a high of 93 at the sixty-fifth session, in 2010. During the past several sessions, a time limit of four minutes has been applied to statements by petitioners. It is desirable that the number of petitioners approved to speak at any session remain at a level that can be accommodated within the programme of work of the Committee.

15. The consideration of the item entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects" is split between the main and resumed sessions. During the main session, an informal interactive dialogue and general debate are held, whereas the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the related draft resolution are considered at a resumed session after the conclusion of the session of the Special Committee.

16. Under the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", it is the practice of the Committee to establish a working group of the whole, chaired by the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to finalize the draft resolution to be submitted under that item.

17. The draft programme of work of the Committee is prepared in accordance with rule 99 (b) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. For the sixty-ninth session, the Assembly allocated the following 15 items to the Committee:

(a) Election of the officers of the Main Committees (item 5);

(b) Effects of atomic radiation (item 48);

(c) International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (item 49);

(d) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (item 50);

(e) Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (item 51);

(f) Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (item 52);

(g) Comprehensive review of special political missions (item 53);

(h) Questions relating to information (item 54);

(i) Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (item 55);

(j) Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 56);

(k) Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (item 57);

(l) Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 58);

(m) Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (item 59);

(n) Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (item 118);

(o) Programme planning (item 133).

18. The Committee will continue to consider and make proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization or clustering of items on its agenda, while taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Question time, interactive dialogues, introductory statements and general discussion of agenda items

19. It is the established practice of the Committee, when considering items or clusters of items, and pursuant to paragraphs 3 (c) and (d) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, to hold interactive dialogues at the beginning of the general debates on various items, such as those on peacekeeping, questions relating to information and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, with high-level representatives of the Secretariat or heads of agencies. Participation in the interactive segments varies widely.

20. Delegations are encouraged to participate actively in the interactive dialogues with questions and unscripted comments. It is strongly advised that such comments and questions be limited to two to three minutes. The general discussion on each item or cluster of items follows the question time.

21. As proposed by the Bureau of the Committee for the sixty-eighth session, a panel discussion on space applications and global sustainable development was organized under the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" during the sixty-ninth session. It is the view of the Bureau of the Committee for the sixty-ninth session that the possibility of organizing a similar event during the seventieth session should be explored.

22. In accordance with the established practice of the Committee, statements made during the general discussion under each item or cluster of items continue to be limited to 10 minutes for individual delegations and 15 minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of delegations.

23. In addition, in accordance with previous decisions of the General Assembly, delegations exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for the consideration of the relevant item on that day.

Draft resolutions submitted to the Committee

24. Some draft resolutions considered by the Committee are contained in the annual reports of subsidiary bodies (the Committee on Information and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples). Others are submitted to the Committee as Chair's texts or by Member States. A practice has evolved whereby the consultations on draft resolutions on the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations Scientific

Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, subsidiary bodies of the Assembly, are chaired by the Member State currently chairing that subsidiary body.

25. The Committee adopts proposals throughout the session after the conclusion of the general debate on the item or cluster of items.

26. There is an established pattern by which some proposals are adopted by consensus while others are adopted by a recorded vote.

Reports and documentation before the Committee

27. When reports are not available in the six official languages of the United Nations within the six-week time frame, every effort is made to make them available, with the agreement of the Bureau, in an advance unedited form, in English only, on the Committee's internal website.

Utilization of the Committee's website and QuickPlace

28. With a view to expediting the sharing of information and promoting efficient and cost-effective work, the Committee's website should be regularly improved, developed and utilized. The increased utilization of the Committee's internal website (https://4thcommittee.unlb.org), for circulating updated information on the status of the Committee's work and negotiations, has greatly facilitated the smooth and timely conclusion of the Committee's work in the past few years.

Conference facilities and meeting arrangements

29. In paragraph 36 of the annex to its resolution 51/241, the General Assembly decided that the First Committee and the Fourth Committee would not meet simultaneously and might consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the Assembly and that the arrangement would not apply if it affected their respective identities, programmes of work and effective consideration of their agendas. In accordance with that provision, the meetings of the Fourth Committee are held either in the morning or in the afternoon, alternating on a weekly basis. The secretariats of the two Committees coordinate in preparing the draft programme of work for each session. The Committee is believed to benefit from the practice, given that it allows fuller, more active coverage of the two bodies by smaller delegations.

30. Unless otherwise specified, official meetings of the Committee are held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. The Chair and Vice-Chairs endeavour to ensure that meetings begin on time, which is critical to the efficient utilization of the services allocated to the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. In accordance with past practice and the relevant decision of the General Assembly, the Committee will continue its practice and waive rule 108 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly with regard to quorum to declare a meeting open.

31. In organizing its work, the Committee strives to meet or exceed the established benchmark of 80 per cent for utilization of conference services. The Committee achieved a utilization rate of 88 per cent for the main part of the sixty-ninth session.

Conclusion of the work of the Committee

32. Bearing in mind the number of meetings allocated to the Committee, a target date of mid-November is set each year for the conclusion of its work. The Committee has been able to conclude its work as scheduled at the sixty-seventh to sixty-ninth sessions and will endeavour to do so in future years.

Future efforts towards the revitalization of the work of the Committee and collaboration with other Main Committees

33. The Committee should consider closer collaboration and cooperation with other Main Committees to identify and address issues that are also under the consideration of those Committees, while respecting the division of responsibilities. The Committee should also take into account the experience and best practices of other Main Committees in improving its methods of work.

34. By its resolution 69/38, the General Assembly decided to convene, within existing resources, a joint ad hoc meeting of the First Committee and the Fourth Committee to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability and to include in the provisional agenda of its seventieth session, under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament", a sub-item entitled "Joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability". The joint ad hoc meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Friday, 23 October 2015.

35. The Fourth Committee will continue to examine ways to revitalize its work, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/307 and previous resolutions, and to take appropriate action by consensus and will keep the Ad Hoc Working Group updated in this regard.